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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000540

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER  
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY  
PARIS FOR C. NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/01/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: RECENT CHURCH ACTIVISM INCLUDING MEDIATION OFFER  
BY CAPETOWN ARCHBISHOP

REF: A. HARARE 323

[B](#). HARARE 159

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

[1](#)1. (C) In recent weeks church leaders, including some from South Africa, have shown an increased willingness to speak out, and to organize events or meetings that draw attention to the political crisis in Zimbabwe. We would welcome Pretoria's and Capetown's assessment of a serious mediation initiative by the Archbishop of Capetown. The GOZ has responded in force to increased assertiveness by Zimbabwean clergy arresting, detaining, threatening and in one case beating a clergy member. Though threatened, so far their activism has been a winning strategy. It is unclear how long the GOZ will allow clergy members that little extra room to express dissent and mobilize parishioners, but their increased activism certainly poses a dilemma for the GOZ. End Summary.

South African Archbishop Intervenes

[1](#)2. (C) On March 12 the Anglican Archbishop of Capetown Njongonkulu Ndungane made his second visit to Zimbabwe in recent weeks and met separately with President Mugabe, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, church leaders, and an range of prominent civic organizations. Although the GOZ press insists that Ndungane is mediating between the GOZ and the UK, the Archbishop has made clear in both his public remarks and private meetings that Zimbabwe is facing a number of internal crises that must be resolved. Both civil society leaders and the MDC were impressed by the Archbishop's understanding of events on the ground and the seriousness and objectivity he seemed to bring to his offer to mediate a sustainable resolution of Zimbabwe's political and economic crises. In response to Ndungane's request, the MDC tapped Secretary General Welshman Ncube to be the point person for

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this mediation effort. We were unable to meet with Ndungane and would welcome Pretoria's and Capetown's assessment of his initiative.

19 Clergy Arrested While Delivering Petition

[1](#)4. (U) Meanwhile, Zimbabwean church leaders are becoming more outspoken in their criticisms of political violence. On February 28 nineteen clergy members from the Zimbabwe National Pastors' Conference (ZNPC) were arrested and detained for five hours in Harare when they tried to deliver a petition to Assistant Police Commissioner Mandeya (who had agreed beforehand to accept the petition) which urged the police force to respect the rights of all Zimbabweans. As they approached the police station carrying wooden crosses they were surrounded by police in riot gear who banged batons on their trucks and sang, "It's been a long time since you were beaten" in Shona. In a public statement, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, of which ZNPC is one of 350 member organizations, condemned the arrest and called for an immediate return to the rule of law.

Prayer Meeting Highlights Victims of Torture

[1](#)5. (U) On February 27 Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo Pius Ncube led a prayer service that featured victims of torture at St. Mary's Cathedral in Bulawayo. Deborah Moyo gave a heart wrenching account, before collapsing with emotion, of her repeated gang rape by fellow recruits and superiors at a GOZ-sponsored Border Gezi youth training camp. MDC MP Job Sikhala described his January 14 torture in which suspected CIO members administered on him electric shocks and urinated on him (Ref B). After the meeting, CIO officers approached and attempted to arrest Archbishop Ncube, but fellow ministers and bishops remained with him, offering some protection as witnesses. CIO officers left, but returned the following day, as did Ncube's supporting clergy; the officers warned Ncube that the previous day's meeting was too political. Ncube sleeps in different safe houses every

night, but is worried about his elderly mother, whom CIO officers have also threatened.

16. (U) On February 24 Archbishop Ncube led a protest at the Bulawayo cricket grounds just prior to the Cricket World Cup match between Australia and Zimbabwe. In a statement Ncube criticized the Australian team for being unsympathetic to the plight of ordinary Zimbabweans by playing the match.

#### Bishop Speaks Out Against POSA

17. (U) In a late February statement entitled "POSA, an Unnecessary Evil Instrument and Totally Undemocratic", Dr. Sebastian Bakare, the Anglican Bishop of Manicaland and President of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, said he felt horrified to live in a community where people cannot engage in development programs for fear of being arrested. He said that as long as the draconian Public Order and Security Act (POSA) is in force there is no chance for desperately needed political dialogue to address the polarized environment in Zimbabwe.

#### "Walk for Love" Ends With One Clergy Beaten

18. (U) On February 14 police arrested 14 people in Bulawayo, and about 50 in Harare during Valentine's Day "walks for love" organized by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) that drew hundreds of participants in each city. Most of the arrestees were women, but one clergyman, Fr. Nigel Johnson of the Roman Catholic Church in Bulawayo, was also arrested. Witnesses reported that police handcuffed and then applied a chokehold on Johnson until he passed out and fell to the pavement. Later, at Bulawayo police station he was reportedly okay, albeit bruised and shaken up; the Bulawayo women, some elderly, spent the night in police cells. The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition condemned the arrests and beating and called for a repeal of POSA, under which the arrests were made.

#### ZRP Stymies Church Meeting - Emboff Detained

19. (U) On February 13 Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition organized a public meeting at the Northside Community Church in Borrowdale, Harare under the theme, "Is the Church Resolving or Deepening the Crisis" to have been addressed by Bishop Trevor Manhanga of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe. Police broke up the meeting before it started, chasing away 30 or so people who had gathered. Police punched in the face a well-known political scientist Dr. John Makumbe while he was handcuffed, and arrested 6 people including Bishop Manhanga, Makumbe and an Emboff (Ref A).

#### Comment:

11. (C) Some church leaders are becoming more active, and more outspoken and the GOZ is matching their activism with an equivalent show of force. So far their activism is a winning game. But it is unclear how long the GOZ will allow clergy members that little extra room to express dissent and mobilize parishioners, and their increased activism certainly poses a dilemma for the GOZ. We are encouraged by the seriousness of Archbishop Ndungane's mediation efforts; what they are able to accomplish will depend in large measure on Mugabe's willingness to discuss internal issues, as opposed to his usual bogeyman; the GOZ-UK relationship. End Comment. SULLIVAN